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Aristasian Speech

Among first-generation Telluristasians (late 1970s and 80s) there was consternation that Received English was being wiped out as if by a totalitarian Directive (which is actually not far from the truth). To some people it was - and is - very distressing. However, it became clear after a while that, although this was undeniably an evil, it was also providential. As with so many things, darkness proposes but Light disposes.

The Queen's English became for Telluristasians, the natural representative of Raihiralan Westrenne - the "high" or raihiralan form of the Westrenne *lingua franca* of the True Raihir (not to be confused with simple "Raihiralan" which is a name for certain Estrenne dialects). It could not have taken this role so completely while it was still being spoken by schizomorphs. This fact was noted quite early and is documented in *Children of the Void* (1996). It has become even clearer since Operation Bridgehead.

Those who have attended speech classes in on-the-ground schools geographically located in England will be aware that the practice of simply referring to R.E. as "Raihiralan Westrenne" long predates Bridgehead.

For Americans the question is more complex. A form of R.E. was used in America up until the Eclipse (Miss Bette Davis speaks it, and Miss Katherine Hepburn seems to speak a curious variant of it). It was never, however, *de rigueur* for all educated speakers as it was in England. Some American-born Aristasians may wish to adopt this as a form of Raihiralan Westrenne, but it would not be necessary, since, as we understand it, the "Eclipse Crisis" in American speech mostly affects vocabulary rather than pronunciation. A cultivated Southern (U.S.) accent is also instinctively accepted as a form of Raihiralan Westrenne.

The "Rivermouth" Problem

It is not in the least necessary to speak Received English in order to be an Aristasian.

The only people who really need to change the way they speak are those from England who are unfortunate enough to be infected with "Rivermouth" (i.e. "Estuary English" speech.

The Providence of the Fall of English

The idea that the assassination of Received English, unpleasant as it may be, was necessary in order to provide a Western speech for Aristasia-in-Telluria was present long before Bridgehead, as the following passage from *Children of the Void* illustrates:

"...It is entirely right that middle-class bongos should talk in a supercilious sub-cockney bleat. The Queen's English should belong to us and only to us."

"Not even to their Queen," said Susan.

"Absolutely," said Elinor, "it is the traditional mark of the superior caste. It would be pure fraud if anyone but us used it now."

A post-Bridgehead writer puts it thus:

''The more the darkness rages, the more it feeds the light.

''The last truly Aristocratic dialect in West Telluria now belongs to Aristasia-in-Telluria. We rather needed it, so it had to be taken away from the Telluryani.

''Awfully sorry and all that, but it wouldn't have happened if they hadn't been so wicked (in some cases) and spineless (in others).

It is ours now.

Words as "Badges"

The vocabulary a person uses is always, among other things, a "badge" of the group or society to which she belongs. When one hears the speech of a gang or specific minority group one will be very conscious of its "badge-words". People who are surrounded by the culture of late Western Telluria may be less conscious of the "badge talk" of so-called "mainstream"; talk that "badges" one as being part of that world.

Expressions like "awesome" (referring, say, to a lightgame rather than the Divine Majesty) are internal badge-words only used by some groups within current Telluria. Expressions such as "she was like" (meaning "she said") are probably even more limited. Terms such as "lifestyle" are "generally accepted", but still constitute the "badges" of the

entire society.

Aristasians are not part of that society, so they do not wear its "badges". They also have certain "badges" of their own.

This is quite apart from questions of "correctness". Aristasians are more concerned with correctness than most Tellurian groups, and tend to use correct grammar at all times. But then not caring about grammar has an ideological content in itself and sloppy grammar can also be a "badge" of belonging to a particular group (or cluster of groups) of casual speakers.

The Aristasian view of correctness hinges, as one would expect, on the question of thamë. Being correct, for an Aristasian, means being in harmony with the laws and logic of grammar (recalling that all speech is derived from "the first, the mother-language", and therefore is an echo of the Divine Word); in harmony with decorum and pleasantness of expression and being in harmony with the standards, ways and customs - the "goodly order" - of Aristasian society.

It is true that almost all language is badge-language to some extent. Telluristasian language, where it is not specifically Aristasian, tends to be that of the pre-Eclipse Received-English variety which was always accepted as correct standard English.

Post-Eclipse type-3 thinking tends to characterise this as the language of the upper classes, and it is not entirely wrong. A normal society takes its tone from above and in adopting the Received English from before the Eclipse, Aristasians identify themselves as an upward-directed, vertical, aristocratic-principled society.

The fact that the badge-speech of the English upper class is now defunct as a Tellurian speech style, owing to the revolutionary proletarianisation of Britain, is an advantage from the Aristasian point of view, since Aristasians are presented with a badge-speech that a) incorporates some fundamental Aristasian values and b) is no longer associated with any group of Tellurians.

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